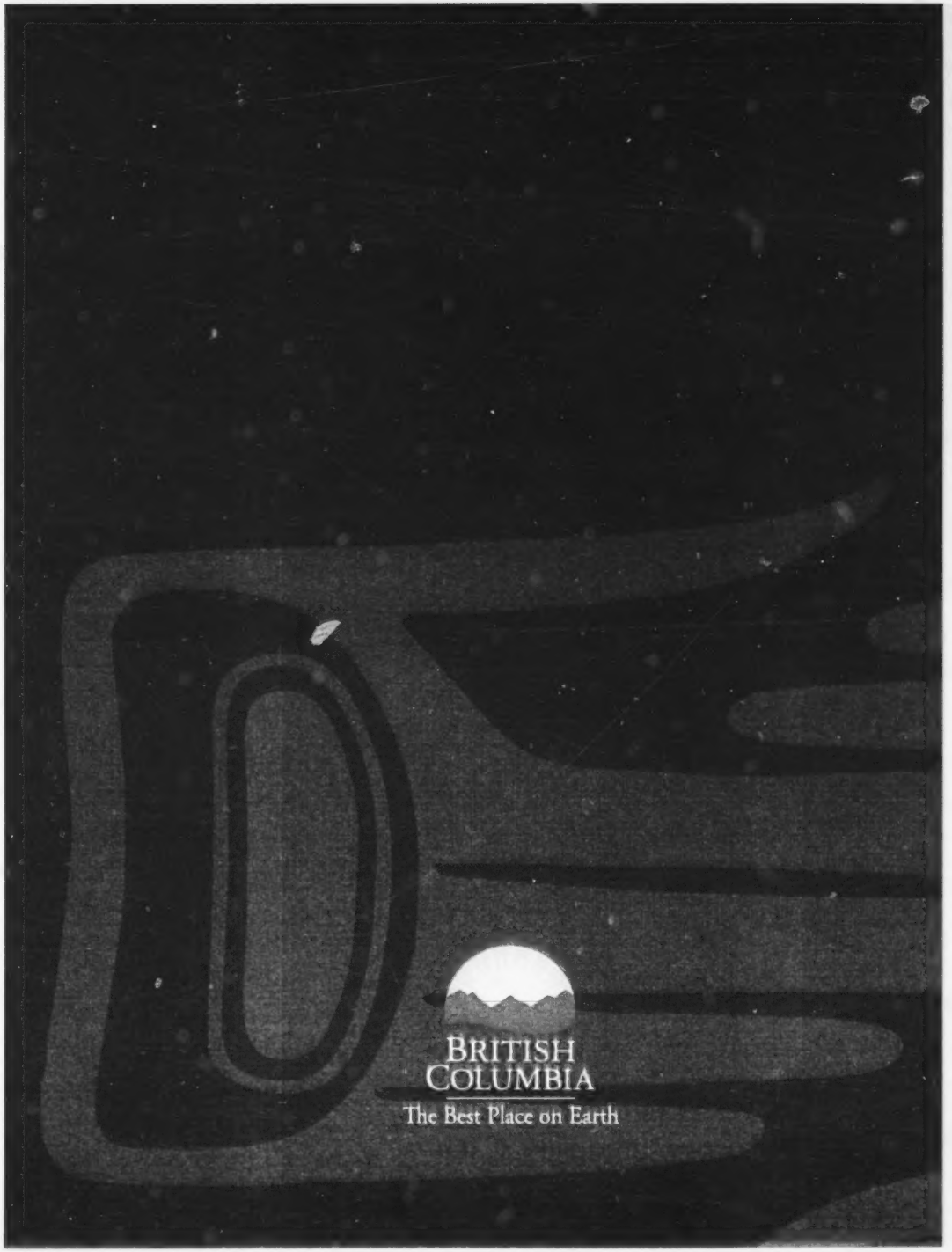



# A New Relationship with First Nations and Aboriginal People

# Partnering for a Stronger Province

British Columbia is home to 197 First Nation bands. It is also home to First Nation band members who live in rural and urban communities away from their reserves. Many people of Aboriginal ancestry who are not registered with a First Nation band live in B.C. too. Aboriginal people—Métis, Inuit and First Nations—make up approximately 4.5% of our provincial population. They represent the most linguistically diverse groups of indigenous people in all of Canada.

But the history of our relations with Aboriginal people in British Columbia has been marked by confrontation, litigation and failure to reconcile our differences. In 2005, this government began a New Relationship with First Nations to address failures of the past.

The Province recognizes that B.C.'s full potential will be realized only when Aboriginal people are an integral part of the social and economic life of the province. In order to bridge existing social and economic gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, government is building working partnerships and engaging First Nations and Aboriginal people in a range of activities. In part, the Province is:

- increasing participation in Aboriginal child care and literacy programs, including those in Aboriginal languages.
- developing BC's contribution to a national blueprint to raise Aboriginal health outcomes to the average for other Canadians within a decade.
- expanding employment opportunities through the Aboriginal Employment Partnership.
- supporting a New Relationship with First Nations by providing a fund to build knowledge and expertise for greater self-determination.
- negotiating treaties and other lasting agreements with First Nations to provide land, cash and greater autonomy to manage their affairs
- signing agreements to provide First Nations access to timber and to share forestry revenues.
- supporting trades training programs for Aboriginal youth.
- implementing an integrated First Nations Tourism and Cultural strategy, including the celebration of the North American Indigenous Games in the Cowichan Valley in 2008.

This is directly related to the Province's strategic vision:

1. To make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent;
2. To lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness;
3. To build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk and seniors;
4. To lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none; and
5. To create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

This is a time of significant change in government relations with First Nations. Our success will be measured in part when Aboriginal people enjoy similar standards of education, health and employment as other citizens. It will also be measured by a more respectful understanding of the contributions of Aboriginal people to British Columbia.

Although this change will evolve over time, we are already making progress. This report highlights many of the Province's achievements in ensuring a more inclusive and prosperous future for all British Columbians.

# Building the New Relationship

*"Undoubtedly, we are at a turning point in our journey towards reconciliation, and we as leaders, as well as the Province, must carry forward this momentum for the benefit of our communities."*

Shawn Atleo, B.C. Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

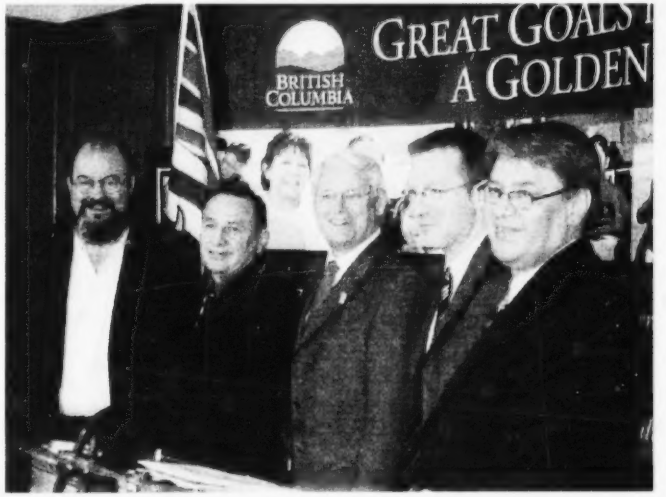
In March 2005, the provincial government developed a vision with leaders from the First Nations Summit, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, and the BC Assembly of First Nations that resulted in the New Relationship. Founded on principles of mutual respect, recognition and reconciliation of Aboriginal rights, the New Relationship vision establishes a framework for a government-to-government partnership and agreement to engage on legal, economic and social matters of interest and concern.

A Leadership Council, made up of members of these First Nation organizations, has met regularly with senior government representatives to work out the parameters of the partnership.

They also worked together to develop the terms of reference for a $100 million capacity-building New Relationship Fund. The New Relationship Trust Act took effect on March 31, 2006, and allowed government to transfer $100 million to an independent corporation governed by directors who will manage the funds.

The Fund will make possible essential training and skills development in First Nations communities in order to seize economic and social opportunities.

It will make possible the building of experience, knowledge and expertise that First Nations need in order to become full partners in the future of this province.




*The Leadership Council meets with Premier Campbell and Minister Christensen. Left to right: Dave Porter, First Nations Summit; Chief Stewart Phillip, President of Union of BC Indian Chiefs; Premier Gordon Campbell; former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Tom Christensen; Grand Chief Ed John, First Nations Summit.*

# Building Relationships in Respect, Recognition and Reconciliation

*"Let us not take timid and tentative steps. Let us take bold and decisive actions to bridge the gaps that have left Aboriginal people behind for far too long. Let us seize this promising moment in our history to claim the full promise of Canada for all Canadians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike."*

Premier Gordon Campbell in his address to the First Ministers' Aboriginal Summit in Kelowna in 2005.

*Vancouver - (Left to right) Squamish language teacher Alroy Baker, and members of the Squamish Language Elders Group, Audrey Rivers and Bethsan Charlie, address the First Citizens Forum at the Work Centre for Dialogue, March 31, 2006. Premier Gordon Campbell announced a further $1 million funding to the $1 million annual funding that the Province provides the First People's Heritage, Language and Culture Council for Aboriginal language preservation.*

Government's commitment to this bold new initiative of building a New Relationship is unprecedented in British Columbia. Our goal over the next decade is to bridge the social and economic gaps that Aboriginal people face. Reconciliation is also at the heart of this initiative, and it involves building a positive, enduring relationship built on trust and mutual respect.

Here are some examples of steps the Province has taken to recognize First Nations and Aboriginal people:

- Attended a ceremony in Olympia, Washington, to acknowledge the historic injustices surrounding the events of the 1884 lynching death of Louie Sam, a 14-year-old member of the Sto:lo Nation.
- Since 2002, held annual First Citizens' Forums, which provide opportunities for Aboriginal people and organizations to talk directly with members of the provincial Cabinet on social and economic issues that affect their lives.
- Maintained the First Citizens Fund of $72 million. The interest earned supports three business programs to increase Aboriginal participation in the B.C. economy and the Friendship Centre Program, the Student Bursary Program, the Elders Transportation Program.
- Along with First Ministers and National Aboriginal Leaders at the First Ministers' Aboriginal Summit in Kelowna in 2005, agreed to take immediate action to improve the quality of life for the Aboriginal people of Canada in four important areas—health, education, housing and relationships.
- Beginning in 2004, set up a $15 million BC Rail Benefits First Nations Trust that provides funds for 25 First Nations for economic development, cultural renewal and educational advancement.
- Provided a total of $120,000 to support participation of Aboriginal Elders Advisory Committees on 24 regional delegated Aboriginal child and family service agencies.
- Celebrated the 10th anniversary of National Aboriginal Day on June 21, 2006 with the First Nations Leadership Council by contributing $200,000 to fund events in Vancouver, including the historic repatriation of a Haisla Nation totem pole from Sweden.
- Contributed $4 million to construction of the Haida Heritage Centre at Qay'llnagaay on the Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands, which will become an international tourist destination showcasing Haida art and culture, in addition to supporting sustainable employment in Skidegate.

# Closing the Gap

*"This is my government's commitment to British Columbia's Aboriginal people. It is also the Government of Canada's solemn undertaking, as a signatory of the Transformative Change Accord signed with our Province and the Leadership Council representing the First Nations of British Columbia. That tri-partite agreement stands as a binding declaration of our governments' mutual resolve to act upon the vision and commitment of all first ministers and national Aboriginal leaders, as set out in the Kelowna agreement. That document was the product of an unprecedented government-to-government collaboration. It was agreed to by the Prime Minister of Canada and all Premiers as an article of good faith and as a compact to restore trust, hope and confidence with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. More importantly, it is 'a shared commitment to action by all parties' – including the Government of Canada – that speaks to 'a 10-year dedicated effort to improve the quality of life of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada."*

Premier Gordon Campbell, Premier's Statement on the New Relationship with Aboriginal People May 2006

On November 25th, 2005, at the First Ministers' Meeting in Kelowna, the Prime Minister, Premier Gordon Campbell and members of the B.C. First Nations Leadership Council signed the Transformative Change Accord.

The Accord builds on the commitments made at the First Ministers' Meeting, as well as the New Relationship vision document. It is a framework which guides improvements to the health, housing, education and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people over the next decade.

The Transformative Change Accord outlines the following principles:

- Recognition that Aboriginal and treaty rights exist in British Columbia;
- Belief that negotiations are the chosen means for reconciling rights;
- Requirement that consultation and accommodation obligations are met and fulfilled;
- Ensure that First Nations engage in consultation and accommodation, and provide consent when required, freely and with full information;
- Acknowledgement and celebration of the diverse histories and traditions of First Nations;
- Understanding that a new relationship must be based on mutual respect and responsibility;
- Recognition that this agreement is intended to support social and economic well-being of First Nations;
- Recognition that accountability for results is critical;
- Respect for existing bilateral and tripartite agreements.

The Accord sets out actions and processes, and commits the governments of British Columbia and Canada, and B.C. First Nations to establish a 10-year plan to bridge the socio-economic gap between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

## *Housing Matters BC*

Aboriginal people represent about 30 percent of the homeless in Vancouver.

In June 2006, the federal and provincial governments announced the devolution of federal social housing stock to B.C. This includes the transfer of 2,600 housing units to the Aboriginal Housing Management Association. This transfer provides the opportunity of self-management and self-determination of housing for Aboriginal people.

*"Years from now, I believe that we will look back on this time and genuinely be able to say that was when a change occurred. That was when a New Relationship did develop. That was when we collectively set our minds and hearts to capitalizing on that New Relationship to improve the lives of the people we represent in the communities where we live."*

*Honourable Michael de Jong, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, addressing First Nations Summit quarterly meeting Kamloops B.C. September 2006*

## *BC hosts Canada's first Aboriginal Health Summit*

Building on the commitment to close the gap that exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, in November 2006, Premier Campbell will host Canada's first Aboriginal Health Summit.

The Summit will bring together Premiers, government officials and Aboriginal leaders from across Canada to showcase their collective efforts to move the Aboriginal health agenda forward and to discuss a variety of health issues facing Aboriginal people.

It will also be a venue to highlight some of the inspirational work already underway throughout Canada and how Aboriginal people are demonstrating their leadership in taking control of improving their health.

## *A Conversation on Health*

Everyone values good health, wants healthy communities, and feels strongly that our health system must be there when we, our children, and our grandchildren need it.

On September 28, 2006, the provincial government invited British Columbians to participate in the Conversation on Health to help improve health services today, and ensure they are protected for future generations.

The Conversation on Health is an historic year-long discussion with British Columbians on how to strengthen, improve and renew our health system within the Canada Health Act. The input received from the Conversation will be used to help government make decisions on future health services and programs. The Province also intends to strengthen the five principles of the Canada Health Act—universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration—and add a sixth principle, sustainability, in provincial legislation.

All British Columbians are invited to join the Conversation on Health and have a voice in the future of our health system. There are six ways to join:

- ***Register for a Regional Forum in 16 Communities around B.C.*** Call the toll-free Conversation on Health phone line or sign up on the Web site. (by calling the toll-free line or signing up on-line, front line health-care workers, administrators, associations, other organizations, First Nations groups and academics also have opportunities for separate meetings to discuss their views.)
- ***Provide Feedback*** on the Web site: www.BCConversationonHealth.ca
- ***E-mail:*** ConversationonHealth@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca
- ***Call*** the Toll-free phone line: 1-866-884-2055 between 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., Monday to Friday. Translation services are available in 130 languages.
- ***Contact*** your MLA to provide your input.
- ***Mail*** a letter to: Ministry of Health, Conversation on Health, 5-3, 1515 Blanshard Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3C8

# Advancing Treaty Negotiations

*"Treaties, if understood, have the potential to be the single largest catalyst for economic development, partnerships and improved governance in British Columbia."*

Yale First Nation Chief Robert Hope

The provincial government is committed to treaty negotiations as a full and formal expression of reconciliation. Treaties are a means for achieving greater certainty over the land and resources and also a means to advance First Nation interests in developing their economies and governing their communities. Since 2001, B.C. has seen an unprecedented level of success in treaty negotiations. Final Agreement negotiations are in progress with Lheidli T'enneh, Maa-nulth, Sliammon, Tsawwassen, Yekooche and Yale First Nations. Negotiations are also underway at more than 40 treaty tables in the province.

The Province supports the treaty process in various ways:

- On 2005/06, B.C. and Canada agreed to 20 new treaty-related measures. These are funding agreements negotiated at treaty tables between Canada, B.C. and First Nations. They address First Nations interests in many areas, including land and resource planning, fisheries, forestry, business development, parks, heritage and culture.
- Signing an interim measures extension agreement with the Hawiih from five Clayoquot Sound First Nations and providing $600,000 for the Central Region Chiefs' Administration and the Central Regional Board, a joint B.C./First Nations body, to manage the lands and resources of Clayoquot Sound.
- Providing in 2005/06, $325,000 in grants to support local governments and organizations to work directly with First Nations on treaty-related matters such as land-use planning, service delivery and reconciliation activities.
- Continuing to implement Nisga'a Implementation Plan and McLeod Lake agreement which includes forestry transition and land parcel transfers.

With certainty created by negotiated treaties, the Province can better attract and retain investment, create jobs and build stronger communities for First Nations for the benefit of all British Columbians.

Above Left:

*August 22, 2005*

*Former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Tom Christensen (left) and Allan Joseph, Chief of the Yekooche First Nation, sign the Yekooche Agreement in Principle in Yekooche north of Fort St. James.*

Above Right:

*March 6, 2006*

*Yale First Nation signs Agreement-in-Principle with British Columbia and Canada.*

*Front row, left to right: Hon. Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Yale First Nation Chief Robert Hope, former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Tom Christensen.*

# Fostering Economic Development

*"Supporting the future of our young people is one of the most valuable things you can do for Aboriginal economic development in this country."*

Dan Brant, CEO of National Aboriginal Capital Corporation

Recent statistics indicate that the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people was almost 17 per cent, compared to about 5 per cent for non-Aboriginal people. High school completion rates of Aboriginal students also do not compare favourably with those of non-Aboriginal students, although completion rates for Aboriginal students have improved by 6 per cent since 2001.

To build experience and expertise in Aboriginal communities and to help Aboriginal youth enter the provincial workforce, the government supports many training and educational programs such as:

- $40,000 to support the National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association's 3rd annual Youth Entrepreneur Symposium in 2006 where 250 young Aboriginal delegates were exposed to leadership, networking and finance opportunities.
- Extending broadband Internet access to First Nations communities to help them bridge the digital divide and provide Aboriginal youth with the ability to access on-line training and skills development opportunities.
- Each year, the First Citizens Fund's Business Loan Program assists the start-up or expansion of approximately 150 Aboriginal businesses creating 350 jobs. Aboriginal lending institutions, partnering with the Province to deliver this program, provide loans valued at $4 million per year.
- Increased funding to $1.8 million in 2005 for 36 new projects to help Aboriginal students across B.C. pursue their post-secondary education and career goals. Government added $330,000 to the Aboriginal special project funding budget, an increase of 22 per cent.
- $1.5 million to the Industry Training Authority for a mobile training unit equipped to offer hands-on skills training in a variety of trades for rural and Aboriginal communities in northern British Columbia.
- $2.25 million to the Malaspina University College Foundation to support a coastal aqua-business training program at the Centre for Shellfish Research that will train up to 500 First Nations and coastal residents over the next five years.
- $4 million for a Bridging Employment program for women who have faced violence or domestic abuse and need support to enter or re-enter the workforce. The funding includes specialized services for Aboriginal and immigrant women.
- $1 million funding through a partnership with industry in 2006

*Left to right: Ron Cantelon (MLA for Nanaimo-Parksville), Shawn Atleo (Regional Chief of the BC Assembly of First Nations), Rich Johnston (President of Malaspina University College)*

for new education and training projects to better equip British Columbians for skilled employment in the oil and gas sector. This is a three-year, $3 million training program.

- $2.4 million in increased funding over three years for BladeRunners, an industry-supported program that trains at-risk youth for construction jobs in British Columbia. Over half of program participants are Aboriginal.
- $1 million in 2006 for the Exploration and Mining Education and Skills Development Program, a province-wide expansion of a successful pilot project that focuses on rural and First Nations communities. The Program is a cutting-edge partnership with communities, industry and local educational institutions that teaches basic hands-on mining and exploration skills.
- $1 million for the Prospector and Environmental Teams Project, an innovative training program that will offer skills development in environmental reclamation and hands-on field experience for B.C. youth from rural and First Nations communities. A partnership between educational institutions, industry and the Province.
- $300,000 for The Northwest School of Exploration and Mining to deliver practical mining and exploration training under real conditions to rural and First Nations communities in partnership with industry and educational institutions.

## Strengthening relations with Métis in British Columbia

In May 2006, the Province and the Métis Nation British Columbia signed the Métis Nation Relationship Accord. The Accord acknowledges the influence of Métis people on our history as well as their emergence as a people with their own language, culture, traditions and self-government structures.

The Accord commits government and the Métis Nation to strengthen existing agreements and continue efforts to close social and economic gaps between Métis and other British Columbians. These efforts will focus at this time on areas of importance to the Métis, including health, housing, education and economic opportunities.

*Vancouver – Former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Tom Christensen and Métis Nation British Columbia President Bruce Dumont signed the Métis Nation Relationship Accord at a well-attended ceremony in Vancouver on May 17, 2006. The Accord symbolizes the strong working relationship that continues to grow between the Province of British Columbia and Métis Nation British Columbia.*

*From left: Métis Nation British Columbia CEO Keith Henry, President Dumont, former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Tom Christensen, Senator Gerry St. Germain.*

# Cooperating on Land and Resource Decisions

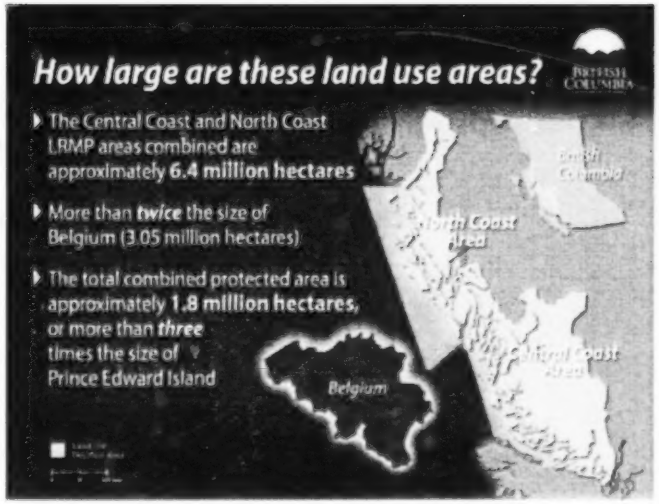
*On Feb. 7, 2006 Premier Gordon Campbell and Minister of Agriculture and Lands Pat Bell were joined by representatives of First Nations, environmental organizations, resource industries and local communities in announcing land-use decisions for the Central Coast and North Coast.*

First Nations throughout the province need to be consulted about activities that might affect their communities and traditional uses of the land in their region. Collaborative land-use planning activities provide First Nations and others with opportunities to work together in order to balance their respective interests. For this reason, the Province works with First Nations to ensure resource development and land-use decisions are made with their input and understanding. For example, the government:

- In 2006, announced land-use decisions for the Central Coast and North Coast covering an area of 6.4 million hectares, protecting more than 1.8 million hectares, including more than 200,000 hectares of Spirit Bear habitat. Twenty-five First Nations were consulted during the land and resource management planning process.
- Legislation established 24 conservancies comprising approximately 541,000 hectares for the protection of biological diversity, natural environments and recreational values, and the preservation and maintenance of First Nations' social, ceremonial and cultural uses. An additional 85 conservancy areas are expected to be established by the end of 2007. The total area of new and existing protected areas for these regions is approximately 1.8 million hectares, or more than three times the size of Prince Edward Island.
- In 2006, the Province provided $600,000 to a joint B.C./First Nations body that extends an agreement to cooperatively manage the lands and resources of Clayoquot Sound.
- Since September 2002, signed forestry agreements with 116 First Nations, providing access to 20.8 million cubic metres of timber and sharing more than $152.2 million in revenue.
- In April 2006, the Province and First Nations agreed on managing aspects of the mountain pine beetle epidemic, including providing about $15 million to address specific areas of interest to First Nations.

## Cooperating on Land and Resource Decisions

- In 2006, signed two agreements with the Blueberry River First Nations. One agreement ensures better consultation between the First Nation and the oil and gas industry, and the other provides Blueberry River First Nations members with economic benefits from resource sectors in the northeast.
- In 2006, signed a Mining and Minerals Protocol Agreement with the Upper Similkameen Indian Band. It provides the framework for a collaborative approach to mining activity and increased opportunities for the Upper Similkameen Indian Band in the mining sector.
- Co-hosted the West Moberly and Salteau First Nations Community Coal Workshop in 2005, in Moberly Lake, B.C. This included a coal tour for elders and school children and a full day of presentations by the First Nations, provincial government and coal industry representatives on topics related to coal mining.
- Signed an agreement with the 'Namgis First Nation for the collaborative management of parks and protected areas in their traditional territories that encompass Alert Bay and the Nimpkish Valley on northern Vancouver Island. This Collaborative Management Agreement will ensure provincial parks are available for the use, recreation and enjoyment of all British Columbians, while preserving links to First Nations heritage and culture.
- In 2005, signed an Understanding with the Haida First Nation, a continuation of ongoing efforts to improve relations with the Haida on the management of land and resources on the Queen Charlotte Islands.
- Provided $230,000 for the Mt. Currie and Douglas First Nations involving independent power projects.
- Provided $65,000 to the Ktunaxa Nation Council to support capacity to engage in the coal industry.


How large are these land use areas?
BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Central Coast and North Coast LRMP areas combined are approximately 6.4 million hectares
More than twice the size of Belgium (3.05 million hectares)
The total combined protected area is approximately 1.8 million hectares, or more than three times the size of Prince Edward Island
Belgium

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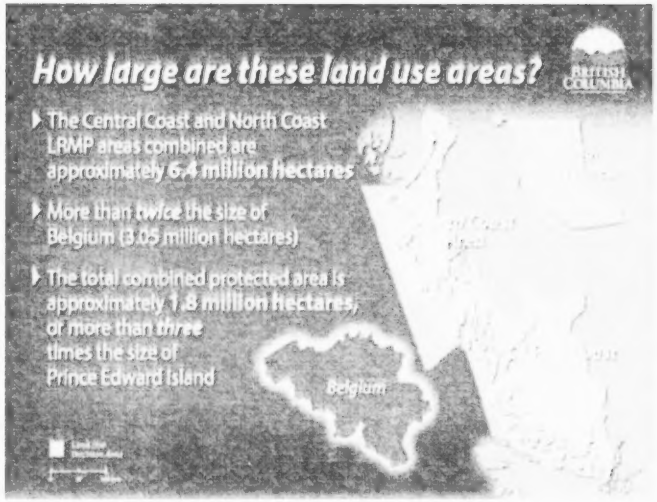
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# Promoting Health, Ensuring Safety, and Supporting Families

The average life expectancy of Aboriginal people is shorter than it is for the general population. On average, Aboriginal people have higher rates of diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality, substance abuse and suicide. B.C. is acting to address these and other health challenges that have impacted the success and well-being of Aboriginals for decades by:

- Updating the Provincial Health Officer's report on The Health and Well-being of Aboriginal People in British Columbia to focus efforts in eight key areas for health authority and provincial government action.
- Encouraging each regional health authority to develop and implement a regional Aboriginal Health Plan, administer regional funding for Aboriginal health care, and ensure coordination and integration of Aboriginal health services into the overall planning and delivery of health.
- Providing funding to support Aboriginal health programs through regional health authorities.
- Leading the way with initiatives such as Honouring Our Health, an Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy.
- Funding of $2.25 million to the Chair in Aboriginal Environmental Health at the University of Northern British Columbia that researches the link between health and environmental data to identify potential health risks in the Aboriginal population.

## *Safety*

- $7 million to fight against crystal meth, including new money for communities to fight the drug at the local level, a public awareness campaign, and the expansion of treatment across the province.
- $2 million of this funding went to the UBCM to help communities fight crystal meth by providing $10,000 seed grants to communities to participate, including First Nations. Over half of the 190 successful applicants were First Nations from across B.C.
- Over $1 million in grants for Community Action for Women's Safety to 53 organizations in more than 70 communities, including First Nations, for projects that address domestic violence and safety issues for women.
- Funding to support recommendations from a community symposium into the disappearances and murders of young women on Highway 16.
- With the federal government, sponsored Aboriginal Youth in the Justice System forum that focused on building relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in the Vancouver Island region.
- Provided $45,000 to the Healthy Aboriginal Network in the creation of their Aboriginal youth suicide prevention comic book. The comic is culturally appropriate, and was written and drawn by Aboriginal youth.

## *Supporting Strong and Healthy Aboriginal Families*

The provincial government is working to support Aboriginal children and families in their day-to-day lives. The provincial government funds health, education and social support programs to build stronger and healthier Aboriginal families. This support takes many forms:

- $12.7 million in additional child and youth mental health services, including the hiring of 102 new mental health clinicians. This will more than double the funding of services, including $10.1 million for new Aboriginal services.
- Support in four Aboriginal communities for the Seeds of Empathy program that teaches children to act in consideration of others reducing bullying and aggression and helping children develop into healthy adults.
- Grants to help 47 licensed Aboriginal facilities replace playground equipment.
- Funding to support 12 Aboriginal care providers to create licensed childcare spaces in Aboriginal communities.
- In 2006, $230,000 to seven Aboriginal agencies for First Nations family and children programs to improve service for Aboriginal children and their support systems in the central Interior.
- Partnering with the Nisga'a First Nation to provide a cultural experience for Nisga'a continuing custody orders. Plans will be made to ensure that each of the children remains connected to their culture in local Nisga'a activities.
- In 2004, signing the first transfer housing agreement in Canada with Aboriginal people, transferring management of 189 housing units from the provincial government to the Aboriginal Housing Management Association.
- Funds for the construction of a housing development that will provide six assisted living units for seniors at the Wrinch Memorial Foundation's Skeena Place. The Wrinch Memorial Hospital provides acute care and a variety of community services to the Hazelton and surrounding First Nation villages.
- Over the past five years, 599 Aboriginal children have been placed for adoption. During this timeframe, the numbers of Aboriginal children placed with Aboriginal families has more than doubled.
- Provided $160,000 in grants to 11 Aboriginal agencies throughout B.C. to support cultural training for foster caregivers and to develop culturally appropriate resources for early childhood education programs.
- Provided a $500,000 grant to help reconnect Aboriginal children in government care to their communities, culture and extended families.

# Supporting Aboriginal Education

*"The benefits of preserving First Nations languages include improved literacy and increased youth graduation and achievement rates, as well as fostering stronger self-esteem among Aboriginal youth. These outcomes and values are essential to bridging the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people."*

Former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Tom Christensen

*May 5, 2006 First Nations Education Agreement Signing Ceremony at Xwemalhkwu School, Hurtle Gravelpit*

*Premier Gordon Campbell joins Nathan Matthew of the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Jim Prentice to sign an historic agreement on First Nations jurisdiction over on-reserve education.*

*Back row from left: Shirley Bond, Education Minister, Tom Christensen, former Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister, Grand Chief Ed John, First Nations Summit, Tyrone McNeil, FNESC Vice President, and Jennifer Eccott, Assistant Regional Director (BC), Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.*

Improving the academic success of Aboriginal children is a significant priority for the provincial government. If we are to reach our goal of becoming the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent, it must include Aboriginal students.

The Province spends $45 million a year, or $950 per Aboriginal student, on educational programs with an Aboriginal component—namely, language and culture, support services, and local Aboriginal education.

Results of a report in December 2005 are encouraging, showing that the provincial high school completion rate for Aboriginal students continues to rise. Yet more is being done:

- In July 2006, the provincial and federal governments signed an agreement with the First Nations Education Steering Committee recognizing First Nations' jurisdiction over education on-reserve in B.C.
- In January 2006, the Province funded a study to determine how to better involve Aboriginal elders in schools. The Ministry of Education provided $10,000 to three school districts participating in the study, and will develop a guide which schools and districts can use.
- The provincial government has signed Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements with 29 school districts and Aboriginal communities. Many more are in planning stages. These agreements set specific academic, cultural and social goals that include:
  - improving the performance of Aboriginal students in reading, writing and math.
  - increasing the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in the regular academic programs.
  - improving the school completion rate for Aboriginal students.
  - encouraging a broad understanding of Aboriginal history and culture through relevant curriculum.
  - growing appreciation for, and knowledge of, Aboriginal languages.
  - increasing Aboriginal students' sense of identity and belonging within the school community.

# Recognizing Aboriginal Culture, Language, Art

*"Our country is vast and it is blessed with a wealth of colours and the varied music of its tongues and accents."*

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean

*The Province has confirmed $3.5 million funding for the 2008 North American Indigenous Games. The Cowichan Tribes of Vancouver Island won the bid to host these games in 2008, which will bring Aboriginal athletes from across North America to the Cowichan Valley.*

Indigenous languages in B.C. constitute a significant majority of indigenous languages in this country. Of 53 indigenous languages in Canada, 32 are found in British Columbia.

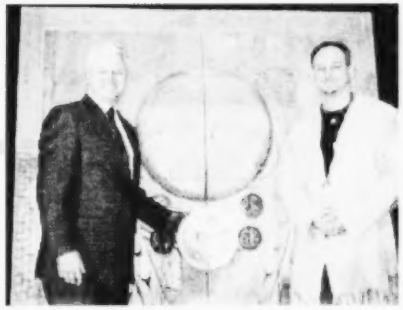
The benefits of preserving Aboriginal languages include improved literacy, increased youth graduation and achievement rates, as well as fostering stronger self-esteem among Aboriginal youth. These outcomes and values are essential to bridging the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Below are some examples of ways in which the Province supports efforts to maintain Aboriginal culture, language and art:

- Provides $1 million annually to the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council to support its work preserving, promoting and revitalizing Aboriginal languages and cultures.
- In March 2006, the Province contributed an additional $1 million to support the work of the Council.
- The additional funds will be used by the Council to support language immersion programs, expansion of First Voices technology, and examining the feasibility of a B.C. First Nations' arts and languages centre.
- In January 2006, provided $250,000 to sponsor the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards ceremony in Vancouver.
- Launched "Honouring our Past" to encourage First Nations to reintroduce Aboriginal place names to British Columbia's landscape.
- Provides $25,000 annually for the First Citizens Fund's Elders Transportation Program to 25 Aboriginal organizations for Elders to travel to heritage, cultural and educational events around the province.
- Awarded a $150,000 grant to enable the Aboriginal Tourism Association of B.C. to begin implementing the Aboriginal cultural tourism strategy.

*January 26, 2006 – Former Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Tom Christensen, and Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, join award recipient Wendy Grant-John of the Musqueam First Nation at the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards in Vancouver.*

# 2010 Games and the Aboriginal Community



*To bring international attention to B.C. and the 2010 Games, Premier Campbell and Squamish First Nation artist tawaxis yexwulla, Aaron Nelson-Moody, unveiled carved doors that greeted visitors to British Columbia-Canada Place in Torino during the Games in November, 2005.*

*"We're honoured and proud to have the Four Host First Nations for 2010 partner with us to showcase all our province has to offer."*

Premier Gordon Campbell, November 28, 2005

First Nations have played an important role in British Columbia's Olympic involvement from the outset. The Four Host First Nations are the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations on whose traditional lands the Games will take place. The Province is working closely with the Four Host First Nations to help leverage maximum economic opportunities and legacies for Aboriginal businesses from the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games by helping to build expertise within the Aboriginal business support network. As a result:

- In November 2005, over 30 Aboriginal business support service representatives, from across British Columbia were trained to deliver 2010 procurement workshops in their communities.
- First Nations trainers on hosted 2010 Procurement Workshops in Barriere, on Simpcw traditional territory, and in Kamloops, on TK'emlups traditional territory, for 41 Aboriginal attendees.
- The Sto:lo Community Futures office held a business forum on First Nations territory, sponsored in part by the Chilliwack Spirit of BC Community Committee. Over 130 attended this 2010 Procurement Workshop/Trade Show with the trade show showcasing more than 20 Aboriginal businesses.
- In May 2006, the Squamish First Nation hosted a 2010 Procurement Workshop in conjunction with a community event called Celebrating Success and Seizing Opportunities

In addition, in 2005, the Province doubled its support for the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler with an additional $3 million in funding, for a total of $6 million.

*"Together, we are committed to building a constructive, new government-to-government relationship, based on mutual respect, recognition, and reconciliation. We are working to build a new, vital, modern British Columbia. One that sees its true potential in the strength of its people, cultural diversity, common heritage, and land and resources.*

*"We are committed to pursuing new horizons of hope and opportunity, by moving beyond the barriers that have held us back for far too long. We are committed to opening up new dialogue, new understanding and new access to resources – to close the gaps in health, education, housing and economic opportunity that have failed Aboriginal people throughout Canada's entire history."*

May 4, 2006
Premier Gordon Campbell's statement in the provincial Legislature on the New Relationship with Aboriginal People

*Premier Gordon Campbell (centre) joined (left to right) VANOC chair Jack Poole, Squat Nation Chief Leonard Andrew, Acting Mayor of Whistler Marianne Wade and Squamish Nation Chief Gibby Jacob to put a commemorative scroll in a time capsule marking the start of construction of the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre. The Premier announced B.C. doubled its support for the project to $6 million.*

## *For more information on programs and services for Aboriginal people and communities:*

**Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation**
PO BOX 9100 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9B1
CANADA
Telephone: Enquiry BC: Vancouver 604 660-2421, Victoria 250 387-6121
B.C. (other than Vancouver or Victoria): 1 800 663-7867
Toll-Free Treaty Information Line Telephone: 1 800 880-1022
E-Mail: *ABRInfo@gov.bc.ca*

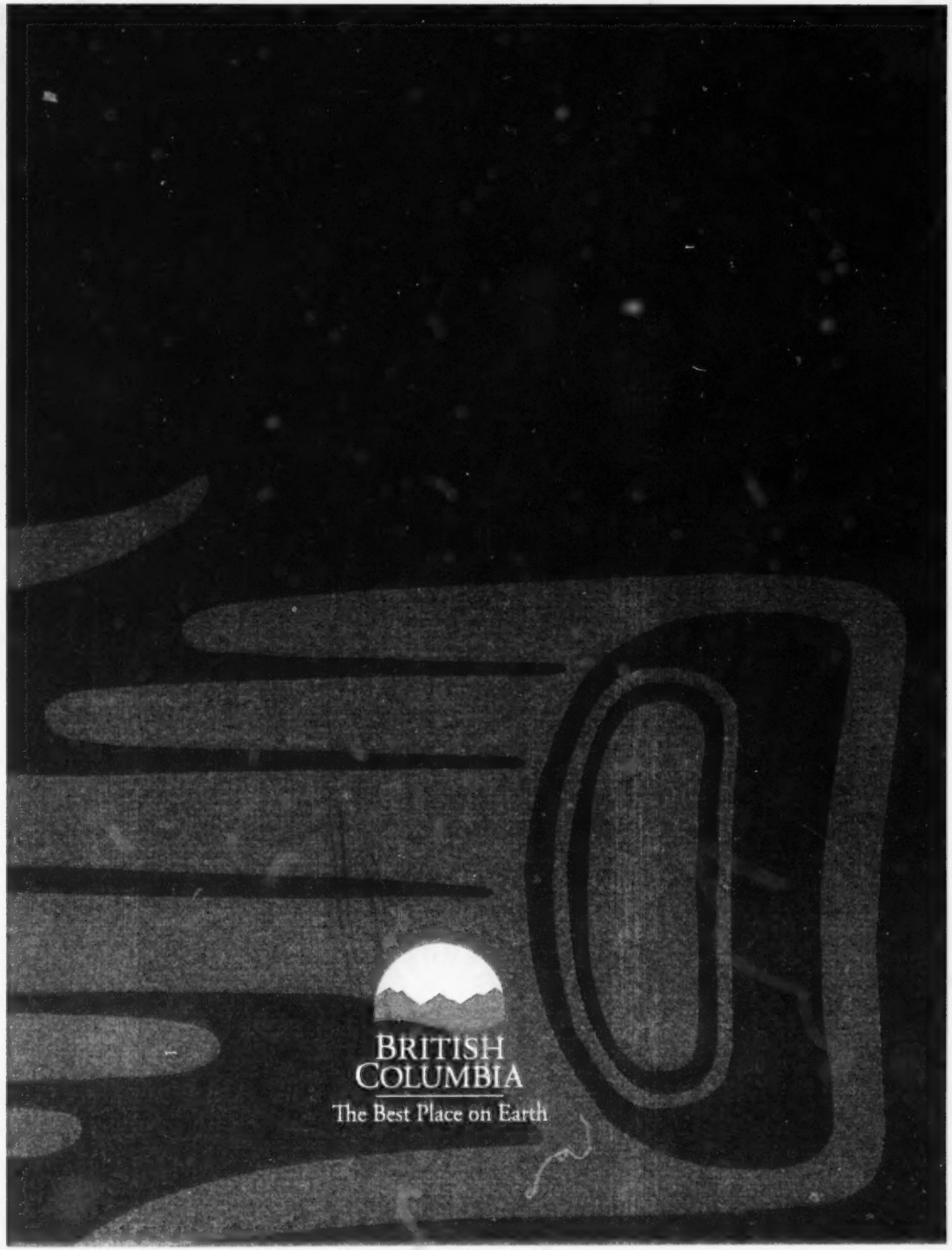
**First Citizens Fund**
Victoria 250 387-2199
*www.gov.bc.ca/arr/prgs/fcfund/fcfund.htm*

**Aboriginal programs – Ministry of Education**
Victoria 250 356-1891
*www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/*

**Aboriginal programs – Ministry of Advanced Education**
*http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/*

**Aboriginal Health**
Victoria 250 952-3151
*www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/index.html*

**Aboriginal Languages**
First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council
Victoria 250 383-2126
*www.fpcl.ca*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